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ABSTRACT

Previous research on Mexican Americans in higher education has ignored more prestigious institutions. A survey of 63 of the 79 Chicano graduates of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in 1979 revealed 2 distinct groups. One group (57%) resembled the traditional profile of Mexican American college students. These students came from low-income or working class families, were first or second generation Americans, were the first college graduates in their families, had often learned Spanish as their first language, and had received little preparation or encouragement for college. They often perceived the university as a hostile or foreign environment. A little over half graduated with grade point averages (GPAs) over 3.0. The nontraditional Chicano students came from middle-class families, often had parents who were college graduates, had learned English as a first language, had gone to high schools where Anglos were in the majority, and did not view UCLA as a hostile or foreign environment. Compared to the traditional group, nontraditional students had less need for financial assistance, and were less likely to have Mexican American peers. Ninety percent graduated with GPAs over 3.0. The early exposure of nontraditional Chicano students to middle class, Anglo "cultural capital" is a critical factor which enables them to negotiate the university on their own terms. Nontraditional Chicanos do not signal their nonAnglo status. The report includes a data table on selected variables, and 56 references. (SV)

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CHICANOS IN ELITE PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES: A DUAL PROFILE

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Hispanics, and Mexican-Americans in particular, represent a growing population in the United States.[1] However, in recent years the number of Hispanic college students has failed to keep pace with this growth and has, in fact, begun to decline.[2] Dispite this ominous trend, the higher education research community has paid little attention to this phenomenon. Most scholarship on minorities treats Hispanics only marginally. Notable exceptions include the work of Alexander and Helen Astin and their colleagues, Thomas Carter, Michael Olivas, V. Tinto, and organizations like the National Council of La Raza , and the California State Postsecondary Education Commission.[3] Furthermore, the few studies which deal with Mexican-Americans in higher education have failed to address some important issues. Because the overwhelming majority of Chicanos attend community and state colleges, studies have limited themselves to this student population, excluding those who attend more prestigious institutions. The result of this limitation is that the corpus of research on Mexican-Americans in higher education presents an incomplete, and hence, inaccurate portrayal of Chicano undergraduates. The failure of most research to describe the diverse and changing character of Mexican- American students limits its policy relevance in key areas of recruitment, persistence, retention, and graduation of Chicano students.

This article attempts to fill this lacuna in the literature. It reports the findings from one comprehensive study which examined Mexican- American graduates of an elite public university. The study investigated the personal, familial, community, and secondary school characteristics of the 1979 Chicano graduating class of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) as these factors related to their academic performance and personal adjustment.[4] UCLA, located in the heart of the world's second largest Mexican urban community, is an elite public university and thus represents the type of institution heretofore rarely included in research on Mexican-Americans in higher education.[5]

The findings of this study contrast sharply with the portrait of Mexican-American

undergraduates reported in the literature. Rather than a homogeneous group of first generation college students drawn from low income, segregated neighborhoods and schools, the Chicano graduates at UCLA were heterogeneous and could be regarded as coming from two distinct populations. One group looks like Mexican-American college students more commonly described in the literature; they are, by-and-large, from poor and segregated neighborhoods, attended segregated minority schools, experienced little support or preparation for college in high school, were the first in their families to attend and graduate from college, and faced many obstacles to college success ranging from discrimination to financial strain. The second group has virtually the opposite background. The fundamental factor distinguishing the two groups is their social class which, of course, affects many of the other pre-collegiate and collegiate experiences of the students. Importantly, these two groups of Chicano undergraduates have distinct academic and social adjustment experiences at UCLA. The finding that there are two, not one, Chicano populations in higher education challenges conventional wisdom about Mexican-American students and the policies that follow from this notion.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Hispanics in Higher Education Prior to the Civil Rights Movement neither governmental nor educational institutions made much effort to identify Hispanics in higher education either at the state or national level. The 1970 census was the first attempt since 1930 to collect systematic data. Current statistics on the status of Hispanics in higher education clearly document their underrepresentation at the university level throughout the United States.[6] In 1985 Hispanics made up only 3.7% of the total number of undergraduates enrolled in colleges and universities nationwide, even though they account for 7.2% of the total U.S. population in 1985. Furthermore, Hispanics are disproportionately enrolled in two-year colleges.[8] Moreover, Hispanics receive less than 3% of all undergraduate degrees awarded in the United States.[9] Because relatively few Hispanics complete an undergraduate program, the number eligible for

admission to graduate and professional schools is also small. Hispanics represent only 2.2% of graduate and 2.9% of professional school enrollment nationwide and receive only 1.4% of all doctoral degrees awarded.[10]

Chicanos in California Mexican-Americans are the fastest growing ethnic group in the nation and constitute the single largest minority group in the Los Angeles area and in the state of California. Many cities, particularly in southern California, are experiencing an explosive growth in Hispanics. Current projections indicate that by 1990 Hispanic students in California, the vast majority of whom are Chicanos, will comprise 48% of the school age student population, and by the year 2000 they will be 52% of that population.[11] These demographic shifts have profound implications for education, and higher education in particular.

Dispite their larger numbers, the status of Chicanos in California higher education is no better than in the nation at large. Although California has proportionately more Chicanos than the US, Chicanos are still a recent phenomenon in higher education.[12] Historically, even postsecondary schools located in the heart of the Mexican-American community enrolled only a handful of Chicanos. Until the 1960's Chicanos were rarely found on California campuses. The Civil Rights movement of the 1960's provided the historical context for Chicano activists to wage battles for access to California's colleges and universities. These actions ranged from boycotting classes in East Los Angeles high schools to violent demonstrations. According to Haro the enrollment of Mexican- Americans in California higher education increased as a direct result of the Civil Rights movement nationally and locally.[13]

The problems of access to higher education are rooted in earlier educational experiences of Mexican-Americans. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, in a series of reports on Mexican-American education, concluded in unequivocal terms that the public school system has failed to provide an adequate education to Hispanic children.[14] The poor quality of secondary education most Chicanos receive contributes to the large number who drop out of high school

before graduation, as well as the under preparation of those who stay in the system thereby reducing the pool of eligible students for higher education. The California State University Commission on Hispanic Underrepresentation estimated that 17.5% of California's 1984 graduating class were Hispanic, but only 4.9% were eligible for admission to the State University system.[15] Elsewhere statistics indicate that only 1.9% of Chicano high school seniors enroll in the University of California.[16] However, the University of California is not alone. Other state colleges and universities have similarly bleak statistics on Chicano enrollment.

Since less than half of the Chicanos who enter the University of California graduate, the successful students--those who receive their bachelor's degree-- are of special interest. They represent precisely the student population overlooked in previous research on Hispanics in higher education. The following sections report an indepth examination of this important group of Hispanic students.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Three research questions guided this study. The first question asked: What are the characteristics of the Chicano students who graduated from UCLA in June, 1979 and do these characteristics cluster in any meaningful way? The second question was: Which of these characteristics, if any, are related to the subjects' college performance and social adjustment to the university? The final question addressed policy concerns: What are the implications of these findings for policy in higher education?

SAMPLE

The sample used in this study consisted of sixty-three of the seventy-nine Chicano students who completed their bachelor's degree at UCLA in June, 1979. A list of 79 students who comprised the Mexican-American graduating class was generated with information from the UCLA registrar's office. Identification of Mexican-American ethnicity was based on student's self-identification of ethnicity on university registration forms. The entire class of 1979 was

asked to participate in this research. The sixty-three who agreed represent an 86% response rate. The participants were evenly divided between males (51%) and females (49%).

DATA

Data for this study came primarily from a questionnaire which was developed specifically for this study and students' university files and records. Included in the questionnaire were items on students' background, secondary school, community, and collegiate experiences. It was pretested on five Chicano undergraduates and then revised based on pretest feedback. Every member of the Chicano graduating class of 1979 was initially mailed a questionnaire. Two follow-up mailings were sent to non-respondents.

The questionnaire investigated four areas that previous research suggests affect college performance and adjustment. The first area, student background characteristics, included questions on personal and familial history, place of birth, generation in the US, languages used, and parental education, occupation, and income. The second area in which data were gathered was the students' childhood community characteristics. This section included items on community socioeconomic status and ethnic composition. The third category of variables, precollegiate educational characteristics, sought information about level of academic preparation for college, the ethnic composition of the high school attended, and presence of teacher and counselor encouragement to pursue college. The fourth area concerned two kinds postsecondary educational experiences: academic and non-academic. Academic measures included university grade point average (GPA), and entry status (special admissions, community college transfer, or general). Non-academic items were quality of social adjustment to the university, financial arrangements, and participation in campus and community activities. Appendix I presents an operationalization of the variables in the study.

DATA ANALYSIS

In order to examine the characteristics of this sample and develop a profile of Chicanos in

selective public universities the data were analyzed in several stages. The first step produced a statistical description of the sample. Frequencies, central tendencies, and variability of the sample on all variables were examined. The descriptive statistics revealed that a single profile of UCLA graduates was impossible to construct. An accurate description of the Chicano class of 1979 required a dual profile because students were not homogeneously low income, first generation students from Spanish-speaking homes and neighborhoods as previous studies suggested. Instead, each of the background, community, family, secondary school, and collegiate experiences revealed a bimodal distribution.

The next phase of the data analysis examined the pattern of the bimodal distributions among the key variables. Clearly family socioeconomic status differences existed among the students. Social class background was used as the basis for dichotomizing the sample because of its fundamental importance for many social and educational outcomes. Family SES was a composite of parental income, occupational level of the head of the household, and the educational attainment of both parents in the home. In order to identify respondents' socioeconomic status two independent judges rated each respondent on criteria of parental education, occupation, and income. Once all the respondents were categorized in this way it was apparent that dichotomizing the sample on the basis of social class reflected the reality of the distribution of variables much better than a schema which treated the students as a unitary sample. One group looked much like the traditional Mexican-Americans who attend college as described in previous studies. However, this group was markedly different from traditional Chicanos in almost every way.[17]

The last stage of the data analysis explored the relationship between group membership (traditional verses non-traditional student) and several key factors related to educational attainment, achievement, and college adjustment. Lambda and Chi Square test the degree of association and significance of the relationships. Table 1 reports the results of these analyses.

FINDINGS

Two primary findings emerge from the data analysis. The first is that stark differences exist between family socioeconomic and other background characteristics of UCLA Mexican-American undergraduates. The second finding is that these differences are related to all other student experiences, most importantly college performance and social adjustment to the university.

[Table 1 about here]

That social class background affects college performance is not new. What is novel is the appearance of two distinct populations of Mexican-American among elite public university students. This is not to say that, in fact, middle-class Chicanos are a new phenomenon in higher education. It may very well be the case that sizeable numbers of middle-class Chicanos have been California undergraduates for decades, but previous research has not described them.

Table 1 presents the results of the cross-tabulations of selected community, familial, high school and university experiences by group membership. Clearly a dual profile of Chicano undergraduates emerges from the data. The following sections discuss these profiles in detail.

Traditional UCLA Undergraduates. The traditional group (57%) comes from low-income or working-class families. They are first or second generation Americans, and are the the first in their families to graduate from college. Their parents were educated chiefly in Mexico and these students were as likely to have learned Spanish as a first language as English. They lived in low-income Mexican-American neighborhoods as children. They had few educational role models and were not likely to receive either teacher or counselor encouragement to pursue a college education, or to have had college preparatory courses in high school. Often traditional students went to community college before transferring to UCLA. These students faced financial strains and

personal difficulties at UCLA. They were more likely to depend on grants and loans for funding than on familial finances. UCLA was often perceived as a hostile and foreign environment where they were likely to experience some racial discrimination. Members of their primary peer group came from the Mexican-American community. While over half of the traditional students graduated from UCLA with GPAs over 3.0 (which is necessary for graduate and professional school entrance), more often than the non-traditional students had GPAs below 3.0.

Non-traditional UCLA Undergraduates Twenty-seven students (43%) of the sample came from middle or upper-middle class backgrounds where parents were usually college graduates. They learned English as a first language and spoke English in the home. They were second and third generation Americans and were raised in predominantly middle-class Anglo neighborhoods and went to schools where Anglos were the majority. During high school they enrolled in college preparatory classes and received a lot of teacher and counselor encouragement to continue their education. Their families were better able to pay for college without loans and grants. They went straight to UCLA from high school and once there, did not experience UCLA as a foreign and hostile environment. They were less likely to draw their primary peer group from the Mexican-American community nor did they report as much involvement in the Mexican-American community as did their more traditional peers. Finally, their college achievement was uniformly high (above 3.0).

THE ROLES OF SOCIAL CLASS AND ETHNICITY

One enduring finding to emerge from sociological and educational research on achievement is the importance of family background for predicting academic and personal adjustment to college.[18] Therefore, it is not surprising that for the Chicano graduates in this study, social class relates to differences in both their scholastic performance and level of personal adjustment to UCLA.

Recent research into how social class differences affect achievement and personal

adjustment, specifically the work of Bernstein, Bourdieu and Passeron, and DiMaggio, LeMont and Lareau, offers important insights into the mechanisms by which class differences shape achievement and adjustment processes.[19] These theorists propose that a major reason middle-class students tend to perform better than working-class ones is that the former's cultural capital--by which they mean language styles, norms and values, knowledge base and symbolic reference system, as well as time and task orientation-- is more closely matched to those of the teacher and the demands of the school system than those of their working-class counterparts. Consequently, for middle-class students there is a good fit between their cultural capital and that of the school, while working-class students are likely to experience a poorer fit which makes learning and social adjustment more difficult. How do these processes carry over into the university setting? Oliver, Rodriguez, and Mickelson's explanation for the superior academic performance of non-traditional Chicano students is worth quoting in detail:

> Each student arrives in the university with a unique social background, repetoire of skills and a 'stock of knowledge'.[20] The student's reaction to the university is predicated on whether this package of attributes matches those of the university. From the analysis of the Chicano data we argue that middle-class background and attendance at integrated schools provide these students with the necessary stock of knowledge to negotiate the university successfully. These students match the university's expectation of what a good student should be. Their exposure to middle-class Anglo cultural capital works for university success: those students who have an early opportunity to learn the types of social and cultural skills and attitudes are more likely to do well in the university and adjust better.... Futhermore, role model(s) serve the social psychological function of providing a 'success' in this sphere, showing the student that someone like him or herself can succeed in an alien environment.[21]

The early exposure to middle-class Anglo cultural capital that non- traditional students experience

is a critical factor which enables them to negotiate the university on their own terms. Middle-class students are more bicultural than their working-class peers.[22] When this factor is added to the superior secondary school academic preparation these students enjoy, it is quite clear why they tend to outperform their working-class peers.

How well someone performs in college is not simply an academic question. Social-psychological factors have long been known to interact with cognitive processess. The social adjustment of traditional students is more problematic then that of non-traditional graduates. Traditional students report incidents of discrimination, feelings that UCLA is an alien, foreign environment, and are much more likely to turn to their own community for friends than are non-traditional students. Why is it that middle-class Chicanos feel much less alienated and report less discrimination than do working-class Chicanos? Perhaps it is because middle-class Chicanos do not necessarily ***signal*** their non-Anglo status. Middle-class Chicanos are more likely to speak, dress, and physically appear to be Anglo while working-class Chicanos are more likely to speak (due to their Spanish or bilingual background), dress, and other wise signal their minority ethnic status to the university.

Visible ethnicity (non-Anglo status) is crucially important because it suggests, or signals, to the observer certain charateristics about the individual which may or may not be true. Signaling theory was initially used to understand the dynamics of employer hiring practices.[23] Labor economists use the theory of signaling to refer to the process whereby race and gender become proxies for worker reliability, employment stability, job experience, appropriate demeanor, and work attitudes which employers use to evaluate prospective employees. Since detailed work histories and trial employment periods are expensive and cumbersome, employers use the applicant's race and gender as signals of her or his probable suitability for the job. Oliver, Rodriguez, & Mickelson argue that the same type of process may well be present in the university. With over 30,000 students, UCLA professors, teaching assistants, bureaucrats, clerks, and

service personnel do not have the time to investigate each student's potentials and abilities.[24] Instead, the students' observed ethnicity and class are interpreted by university personnel as proxies for student ability and aptitude for college success. University personnel with whom students interact perceive the non-Anglo student, respond to the ethnic signal, and invoke a stereotype: this person is weak academically, has poor study skills, and is only at the unversity because of affirmative action or special admissions.

> University personnel may not be consciously racist or discriminatory, but given the bureaucratic nature of the university, the large classes, and the impersonal way students are processed, minority students are likely to be treated and evaluated by the university, at least initially, on the basis of their racial signal. It is not that the university has adopted racially biased modes of evaluation, but rather the 'norm of efficiency' causes people to use their own 'relevancies' derived from their own stock of knowledge as a basis of their everyday interaction. Given the central importance of race and race-related explanations in the culture at large, interaction based on signaling becomes an efficient and rational basis of evaluation. This then sets up a chain of negative, self-fulfilling interactions which 'set in motion' experiences that lead some minority students to actually achieve poorly and to feel quite alienated for reasons that are now concrete.[25]

The findings discussed in this section describe a dual profile of Chicano undergraduates in one elite university. The existence of the previously overlooked group of students is an important finding with far-reaching implications for higher education policy.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

While there may be agreement among educators that increasing Chicano college graduates is a desirable goal, there is less agreement over the policies needed to increase Mexican-American student enrollment and graduation. One fundamental conclusion of this research is that any higher

education policy or program aimed at Chicanos must to be formulated with the recognition that the Mexican-American population is far from homogeneous. Policies should reflect diversity. With this in mind, we offer several policy recommendations.

The Role of Academically-Able Students This research reveals the presence in elite public universities of an untapped resource for the struggle to increase Mexican-American enrollment, persistence, and graduation-----academically-able Chicano undergraduates. While it is more likely that academically-able students will come from the ranks of the non-traditional group, quite a few traditional students also possess these qualities. These academically-able students share the scholastic aptitude and social skills necessary for negotiating the bureaucratic and academic obstacles the university presents to new students. As a cadre of role-models, mentors, and tutors, these academically-able Chicanos can serve as a bridge between the Mexican- American community and the university. Policies and retention programs designed to utilize this cadre of successful Chicano students as bridges will be a significant step toward meeting the challenge of low Chicano enrollment, persistence, and graduation. The following discussion identifies programs in which these successful students can serve in the capacity of bridge-builders.

Recruitment In order to reverse the current decline in Mexican-American enrollment in higher education, policy-makers must develop a comprehensive plan that extends from elementary through secondary school. These policies must address recruitment, admission, enrollment, and retention. The first component of this strategy is recruitment. To this end, junior and senior high schools must be considered fertile ground for college recruitment interventions. The reasons why interventions must take place early is that (1) a large number of Chicano students leave before they enter or complete high school, and (2) in order to complete necessary prerequisites students must begin college preparation course work in their freshman year. Recruitment programs need to begin in junior high school or earlier. Senior year outreach

programs are too late for Chicanos.

We recommend that programs be developed which will utilize the knowledge, academic and social skills of successful Chicano undergraduates, the cadre of academically-able students who can serve as role models for elementary, junior and senior high students. In their capacity as bridge- builders between the traditional Mexican-American community and the university, student mentors will (1) visit classrooms in primary and secondary public schools, (2) participate in recruitment workships with parents and public school personnel, (3) staff tutorial workshops with junior and senior high students where successful Chicano undergraduates share the 'nitty-gritty' of college life with their younger peers. In addition, academically-able students themselves will be motivated by their own leadership roles. However, this cadre of successful Chicano students is meant to assist, not replace, the university's professional staffs.

A cautionary note on recruitment involves the growing number of non-traditional students. The population of middle-class students is growing although total numbers of Chicano undergraduates are not. This trend presents the university with a dilemma. Increasing enrollment of non-traditional Chicano undergraduates may be perceived by administrators as evidence that elite universities are doing a good job recruiting students from the underrepresented Chicano population. Of course, this will be false. Given a growing cohort of middle-class Mexican-American undergraduates, elite universities may lose incentives to recruit and admit traditional, lower-income and working-class Chicanos. The university's recruitment strategy must aggressively reach into the traditional Mexican-American community. The danger is that unless university recruitment and admissions programs reflect the changing demographics of the Chicano student population, elite public universities may become schools which serve only daughters and sons of the most privileged sectors of the Chicano community, a charge often leveled at the university by the Anglo community.

Admission A policy currently being tested in some California colleges can be a potential

threat to Chicanos and other underrepresented minorities, according to many leaders in the Chicano comunity. This is the proposed higher admissions standards for state colleges and universities. middle-class Chicanos who apply for admission to elite public universities compare favorably with the middle-class Anglo student population on key background and secondary school characteristics. For middle-class Chicanos admission and retention is usually not a problem. Stricter admissions criteria will not adversely affect them. However, the imposition of stricter standards of admission without special admissions programs and commensurate interventions in the public schools to better prepare Hispanics for college, will have the probable effect of limiting access to the university of traditional Mexican-American students. In order to increase the admissions of traditionally underrepresented Chicanos it will be necessary to upgrade and expand special admissions programs.[26] The effect of a policy of stricter admission criteria may be to hasten the pace at which elite public universities and colleges become exclusively middle-class institutions.

Finally, the diversity in the Chicano undergraduate population suggests that special attention be paid to the needs of first generation college students. For example, students with college educated role models in the home or extended family may better understand the admissions process; while the traditional student, with no role model may require more in-depth assistance and support during the admissions/recruitment process.[27] Academically-able undergraduates who serve as mentors can be especially useful in this area.

Retention

For students with poor academic preparation, the transition from high school to college is exceptionally difficult. Minority students who successfully meet academic, emotional, and psychological demands of college life are most likely to persist beyond the first year.[28] Retention of Chicano students may hinge on the development of programs which address the special needs of poorly prepared undergraduates. Examples of successful programs include the Professional Development Program at the University of California, Berkeley, and two programs at California

State Universities, the Faculty/Student Mentor Program at San Jose State University, and the Student Internship Program at Sacramento State University. These programs share common features such as the use of successful students as mentors, role models, and tutors who provide academic and social support for those who are struggling to survive in college.

Financial aid has been demonstrated time and time again to be an institutional policy which affects retention positively. Specifically, those who receive it are relieved of some of the financial burden they must shoulder, but more importantly, university grants and loans tell the student that the institution has a vested interest in her/his future. Oliver and his colleagues report that among traditional Chicanos at UCLA, those with finanical aid are less alienated than those with none.[29] Universities serious about retaining minority students must expand financial aid resources and programs, and creatively design programs for the future.[30]

Campus Environment and Administrative Support

Last fall a rash of racist incidents from the Citadel in South Carolina to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor illustrated the enduring legacy of racism on college campuses. The absense of cultural diversity in curricula, faculty, and pedagogy contribute to the cultural environment which fosters racism. Racism and the absence of ethnic diversity on college campuses work against minority achievement and retention because they contribute to students' perceptions of majority white schools as hostile, foreign environments. While working to achieve campus diversity in the long- run, there are several concrete steps which university administrators can take to build a solid foundation for the future. The following list, while not exhaustive, suggests certain policies and programs:

- develop and distribute statements of the univeristy's mission and policies consistent with educational equity;
- expand faculty and staff affirmative action so that absolute numbers of minority faculty and staff increase;

- expand multicultural components throughout undergraduate curricula and graduation requirements;
- develop an ongoing data base which includes information on students' race or ethnicity;
- assess student needs both within race/ethnic groups and between them;
- work more closely with the Mexican-American community in the development and implementation of programs;
- evaluate current recruitment, admissions, and retention programs to ascertain their effectiveness.[31]

While these interventions alone with not affect minority enrollment, retention, and graduation in the near future, the long-term effects of these programs will contribute to a college environment which is far less alienating to minority students than current campus climates.

Integrated Education

Finally, the findings from this study are suggestive for another area of educational policy. This study, as well as numerous others, shows that students who attended integrated or predominantly white high schools fared better at the university than those who went to segregated minority schools.[32] Until segregated minority schools are as effective in preparing students for college as integrated or predominantly Anglo schools, school desegregation at the elementary and secondary level remains an important policy intervention.[33] This is true not only because integrated education may better prepare students' academic skills, but because it exposes working-class students to middle-class Anglo cultural capital, the major currency of the university. The experience of non-traditional Chicano students illustrates the importance of integrated education.

Conclusion

The evidence is clear that far too few Mexican-Americans attend college and that institutions of higher education need to recruit, admit, and retain many more Chicanos than they

are presently doing. There are several compelling reasons for this, not the least of which is the undemocratic character of public institutions of higher education which fail to service a significant portion of the public. Beyond this, any human talent which is wasted is both an individual and social tragedy. Ethnic diversity in American society requires that there be ethnic diversity among leaders-- those trained and educated in institutions of higher education.

The fundamental conclusion of this research is that any higher education policy or program aimed at Chicanos needs to be formulated with the recognition that the Mexican-American population is far from homogeneous. Recruitment, admissions, and retention policies and programs must reflect this diversity. Given the reality of the declining numbers of minority students it will be necessary for universities to aggressively pursue Hispanic students in order to simply maintain current enrollment numbers. Institutions must design and implement policies, organizational structures, and program operations to address the needs of the student population being served, rather than continue to offer 'band-aid' solutions which attempt to patch up educational wounds caused by years of neglect and miseducation. Christoffel describes the challenges universities face:

> ... the truth of the matter is that ... too many colleges and universities themselves have refused so far to make the kind of institutional commitment necessary to ameliorate the problem. It is not simply a matter of finding the financial resources. It is more an issue of institutional reform-- a willingness to provide the student services in tune with student needs, hire the faculty and staff, reform teaching and the curriculum, and develop an institutional environment in which all students, regardless of background can flourish. Until more institutions are willing to make this kind of broad effort, minority enrollment [and graduation are] unlikely to increase significantly.[34]

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1. The term Hispanic refers to all people of Latin American descent, both native born and immigrant. We limit our use of the term Hispanics to only those instances when we refer to census and other secondary data sources. Census data and other demographic statistics often fail to distinguish among Hispanic ethnic groups. Mexican-American and Chicano are used interchangeably throughout this paper to denote the same ethnic group, people of Mexican descent irrespective of place of birth. While Hispanic is a much broader term than the other two, the majority of Hispanics in California, as well as in the US, are of Mexican descent. We acknowledge that these designations obscure important differences between, for example, native born and immigrant populations of various national origins. However, the focus of this research is on students of Mexican descent. The term Anglo refers to all persons of European-American background.

2. Californie Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC), *California College Going Rate* (Sacramento, CA, 1984).

3. See, for example, A. W. Astin, *Preventing Students from Dropping Out*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1972); A. W. Astin, "The Myth of Equal Access," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Sept. (1975); A.W. Astin, *Four Critical Years*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977), A. W. Astin, *Minorities in Higher Education*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982), H.S. Astin and C.P. Bircjaga, *Chicanos in Higher Education: Progress and Attainment*, (Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, 1981); National Council of La Raca, *Recent Hispanic Polls: A Summary of Results*, (Washington, D.C.: Hispanic Policy Development Project, 1984); California Postsecondary Education Commission, *Student Charges, Student Financial Aid, and Access to Postsecondary Education*, (Sacramento, CA, 1982); California Postsecondary Education Commission, *California College Going Rates*, (Sacramento, CA, 1984); California Postsecondary Education Commission *Background Papers to a Prospectus for California Postsecondary Education, 1985-2000*.

(Sacramento, CA., 1985a); California Postsecondary Education Commission. *Directors' Report* Sacramento, CA, 1985b); California Postsecondary Education Commission. *Graduate Education in California, Trends and Issues,* (Sacramento, CA, 1985c); California Postsecondary Education Commission. *Background for Expanding Educational Equity.* (Sacramento, CA, 1986a); California Postsecondary Education Commission. *Expanding Educational Equity in California's Schools and Colleges.* (Sacramento, CA, 1986b); California Postsecondary Education Commission. *Fifty Views of California Population and Enrollment Past, Present, and Future.* (Sacramento, CA, 1986c); also see T.P. Carter and R. D. Segura, *Mexican -Americans in School: A Decade of Change,* (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1979); M.A. Olivas, *The Dilemma of Access: Minorities in Two-Year Colleges,* (Wasington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1979); M.A. Olivas, "Federal Higher Education Policy: The Case for Hispanics," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis,* 4, (1982): 301-310; V.T. Tinto, "The Limits of Theory and Practice in Student Attrition," *Journal of Higher Education,* 53, (1982): 687-700.

4. C.J. Rodriguez, "Characteristics of Mexican-American Students Who Graduated from UCLA in 1979." (Ed.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles 1982).

5. The University of California at Los Angeles is a large campus (about 30,000 students) of the University of California (UC). California higher education is a tri-tiered system: (1)community colleges, (2) the state colleges and state universities, (3) and the University of California. The University system is the elite, research-oriented and most heavily financed tier in the system. Likewise, admission to each tier is different, with the university possessing the highest standards. In order for students to be admitted to UC they must meet the following criteria: (1) graduate from an accredited high school in the state, (2) meet a formula based on high school GPA and combined scores on the SAT. For example a high school GPA of 2.76 and a score of 1600 on the SAT is the lowest combination that is admitted. A high school GPA of 3.00 must be combined with a SAT score of 1,090 while a 3.30 GPA only needs a combined score of 400; (3) Finally, students must have

taken and earned a C or better in a core of high school courses. Likewise, transfer from community colleges and other four year schools requires that students either meet the above requirements and earn at least a 2.00 GPA in their first two years of study (which includes a specified set of courses), or if they were not initially eligible for UC upon graduation from high school, they must make up those core courses in which they received a grade no less than C and have a 2.40 GPA in their junior or transfer college credits (standards for nonresident students are even tougher, although special admits based on athletic ability and other special talents are granted).

The stringency of these standards means that even though California has a substanial pool of Chicano and black high school graduates, their proportions in UC is drastically underrepresented. Only about 15% of the high school graduates in the state are eligible for UC but among minorities it is much lower. For Chicanos, for example, only 4.7% are eligible. During the year in which the study was undertaken, Chicanos represented about 4.1% of the undergraduate student body at UCLA, while blacks constituted 4.9%. This was the case despite the fact that the Los Angeles area secondary schools, the schools from which most of UCLA's students graduated (about two-thirds of the student body), contained large numbers of minority students. At the time of this study (1982) the school age population of the Los Angeles area was 45% Chicano and 23% black.

6. A. Astin, *Minorities in Higher Education*; A. Astin, "The Myth of Equal Access"; CPEC, *College Going Rates*; C. M. Haro, *Criticisms of traditional postsecondary school admissions criteria: A search for alternatives*, (Chicano Studies Research Center Publication No. 1, University of California, Los Angeles, 1978); L. Middleton, "Hispanics on Campus: A long way to go," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 4, (1980): 8-10; M. Olivas, "Hispanics in Higher Education: Status and Legal Issues," (paper presented at the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, Bal Harbour, FL, 1978).

7. Office of the Chancellor, *Hispanics and Higher Education: A CSU Imperative*, Final Report of the Commission on Hispanic Underrepresentation (Long Beach, CA: The California State

Universities, 1985).

8. A. Astin, *Preventing Students from Dropping Out*, M. Olivas, *Hispanics in Higher Education: Status and Legal Issues*, F. L. Pincus, "The False Promise of Community Colleges: Class conflict and Vocational Education," *Harvard Educational Review*, 50, (1980): 332-357.

9. Olivas, *Hispanics in Higher Education: Status and Legal Issues*.

10. Chronicle of Higher Education, July 23 (1986): 25.

11. CPEC, *Background for Expanding Educational Equity*.

12. R. W. Lopez, A. Madrid-Barela, and R. Macias, *Chicanos in Higher Education: Status and Issues*, Monograph No. 17. (Chicano Studies Reseech Center, University of California, Los Angeles, 1978): 5.

13. Haro, "Criticism of Traditional Postsecondary School Admission Criteria."

14. U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. *Ethnic Isolation of Mexican - Americans in the Public Schools of the Southwest. Report I, Mexican -American Education Study*, (Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office, 1971a); U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. *The Unfinished Education. Report II, Mexican-American Education Study*. (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1971b); U.S. Commission on Civil Right. *The Excluded Student. Educational Practices Affecting Mexican - Americans in the Southwest. Report III, Mexican-American Education Study*, (Washington, D. C. Government Printing Office, 1972a); U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Mexican -American Education in Texas: A Function of Wealth. Report IV, Mexican -American Education Study*: (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1972b); U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Teachers and Students: Differences in Interaction with Mexican-American and Anglo Students. Report V, Mexican-American Education Study*, (Washington, D. C. Government Printing Office, 1973); U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Toward Quality Education for Mexican -Americans. Report VI, Mexican-American Education Study*: (Washington, D. C. Government Printing Office, (1974)

15. T. A. Arciniega, *California State University Commission on Hispanic Underrepresentation*, Office of the Chancellor, (California State University, Sacramento, CA, 1985).

16. CPEC, *Director's Report*.

17. The traditional group refers to low income and working Chicano students whose personal, family, and community characteristics reflect those of Chicanos traditionally described in the literature. Non-traditional students are those from middle and upper-middle class families. We call them non- traditional because they are absent from previous research. We no not mean to imply that as a group they are new to higher education, we do not know. We suspect that middle-class Chicanos have been college students for quite some time although research neglected them.

18. W. R. Allen, *Black in White: Black Students in Predominantly White Universities*, (forthcoming); A. Astin, *Minorities in Higher Education*; G. Thomas, *Black Students in Higher Education: Conditions and Experiences in the 1970's*, (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1981).

19. B. Bernstein, *Class, Codes, and Control Vol. 3. Towards A Theory of Educational Transmission*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975); P. Bourdieu, "Cultural Reproduction and Social production." in *Power and Ideology in Education*, eds. J. Karabel and H. A. Halsey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); P. Bourdieu and J. C. Passeron, *La Reproduction*, (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1970); P. DiMaggio, "Cultural Capital and School Success: The Impact of Status Group Culture Participation on the Grades of US High School Students," *American Sociological Review*, 47, (1982): 89-101; M. Lamont and A. Lareau, "Cultural Capital: A Critical Review of Recent American Literature." (Paper presented at the metings of the American Sociological Association, New York, New York, 1986); J. Karabel and A. H. Halsey, "Introduction," in *Power and Ideology*, pp. 44-66.

20. Alfred Schutz is credited with this concept. See A. Schutz, *Alfred Schutz on Phenomenology and Social Relations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

21. M. L. Oliver, C. J. Rodriguez, and R. A. Mickelson, "Brown and Black in White: The Social

Adjustment and Academic Performance of Chicano and Black Students in a Predominently White University," *The Urban Review,* 17, (1985): 3-24; p.16.

22. Some observers may conclude that non-traditional students are assimilated, not bicultural. The issue of assimilation is very complicated and there is a great deal of controvery as to what constitutes assimilation. It does not necessarily follow from the data that middle-class Chicanos are more assimilated than their working-class counterparts. This is still an empirical question beyond the scope of this article. However, we would rather conceptualize their use of cultural capital as evidence of their bicultural repertoire of behaviors (Bourdieu, "Cultural Reproduction and Social Production"; C.A. Valentine, "Deficit, Difference and Bicultural Models of Afro-American Behavior," *Harvard Educational Review,* 41,1971 137-157). Therefore, the policy implications from these findings is not to strip racial and cultural minorities of their cultural backgrounds, but to enlarge their repertoires of behavior and their knowledge of how and where to use it to make them more successful in the sphere of school and work. On the larger front, demands must be made to include unique attributes of minority groups' in the organization and structure of educatinal institutions as well. For a more comprehensive treatment of the question of assimilation and Mexican-Americans, see H. J. Abramson, "Assimilation and Pluralism," in *Harvard Encyclopaedia of Ethnic Groups,* ed. Stephan Thernstrom, (Cambridge,MA: Harvard University Press, 1980); R. D. Alba, "Social assimilation among American Catholic national- origin groups," *American Sociological Review,* 41, (1976): 1030-1046; J. Drachsler, *Democracy and Assimilation,* (New York: MacMillan, Co, 1920); N. Glazer and D. P. Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: the Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City, 2nd edition,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970); M. M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: the Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); L. P. Metzger, "American Sociology and Black Assimilation: Conflicting Perspectives," *American Journal of Sociology,* 76,

(1971): 627-647; L. Elias-Olivares, E. A. Leone, R. Cisneros, et al., *Spanish Language Use and Pubic Life in the U.S.A.*, (Hawthorne, NY: Aldine, 1985); J. D. Vigil, *From Indians to Chicanos: The dynamics of Mexican-American Culture*, (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1980).

23. M. Spence, *Market Signaling: Information Transfer in Hiring and Related Processes*, (Cambridge, MA: Harverd University Press, 1973a); M. Spence, "Job Market Signaling," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 87, (1973b): 355-374.

24. Style, carriage, and demeanor are not the only characteristics which signal status; color is a major factor. It is an unfortunate fact of American life that the more a person of color differs physically and in skin tone from the cultural ideal of the fair-skinned, blue-eyed blond, the more she/he suffers from discrimination.

25. Oliver, Rodriguez, & Mickelson, "Black and Brown in White," p.18.

26. It must be noted that the California State University system conducted a study which reported the opposite; that traditional minority students would not be hurt by tightened entrance requirements. Dispite this report, there remains a great deal of concern about these new standards particularly among student and community groups like the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF).

27. Both authors are former high school teachers. While the first author was still in the classroom she experienced a clear illustration of this. One of her most brilliant pupils, a Chicano, clearly qualified for UCLA. He was an outstanding student in English (although it was his second language), math, science, social studies, and he was a star soccer player. However, he had no concept of what college required, how it get in, what tests to take, and so on. No one in his family had gone to college. The senior author accompanied him to UCLA one afternoon when he was interviewed by an admissions officer who proceeded to hand him the 1" thick sheaf of papers which needed to be filled out. He was visibly overwhelmed. After his graduation she discovered that the paper work was such a formidible barrier he never applied and joined the military instead. Had there been an

outreach program the high school for this young man to utilize, and someone to help him through the bureaucratic maze of the university's admission procedures, it is likely that he would have attended and graduated from UCLA.

28. R. N. Fox, "Application of a Conceptual Model of College Withdrawal to Disadvantaged Students," *American Educational Research Journal,* Fall, (1986).

29. Oliver, Rodriguez & Mickelson, "Black and Brown in White."

30. CPEC reports that grants are more effective than loans in holding onto minority and especially Mexican-American students.

31 B. Clewell, and M. Ficklen, *Improving Minority Retention in Higher Education: A Search for Effective Institutional Practices,* (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1986).

32. W. R. Allen, "Correlates of Black Student Adjustment, Achievement, and Aspiratins at a Predominantly White, Southern, University," in *Black Students in Higher Education: Conditions and experiences in the 1970's,* ed. G. Thomas, (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1980); Allen, forthcoming; J. Hochschild, *The New American Dilemma,* (New Haven:Yale University Press, 1986); P. C. Gandara, "Early Environmental Correlates of High Academic Attainment of Mexican-Americans from Low SES Backgrounds" (Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1979).

33. This is not to say segregated minority schools cannot produce college bound students; they certainly can. However, historically, they do not.

34. P. Christoffel, *Minority Students' Access and Retention: A Review. Research and Devlopment Update,* (New York: The College Board, 1986).

APPENDIX I

Operationalization of Selected Variables

Variable Name	Description of Variable	Levels of Variable
First Language	First language learned	a. English b. Spanish c. bilingual
Parental Education	Educational attainment of head of household	a. College grad b. high school grad c. grade school grad
Dominant Language	Language spoken most often in home during grade school	a. English b. Spanish
Generation	Number of generations in the United States	a. first b. second c. third
First Attend College	Is Student the first in family to attend college?	a. yes b. no
First B.A.	Is Student the first in family to attend college?	a. yes b.
Community SES	Socioeconomic status of student's childhood neighborhood	a. low income b. middle income c. high income
Ethnic Composition	Ethnic composition of community during childhood	a. Anglo b. mostly minority c. integrated
H.S. Composition	Ethnic composition of high school	a. Anglo b. mostly minority c. integrated
Teacher Encourage	Student experienced teacher encouragement and support for college	a. yes b. no
Counselor Encourage	Student experienced counselor encouragement and support for college	a. yes b. no

APPENDIX I (continued)

Decided College	When decided to attend college	a. grade school b. high school c. after high school
College Prep	Student participated in college prep courses in high school	a. yes b. no
CC Transfer	Student transferred from community college	a. yes b. no
Financial Difficulty	Student had difficulty meeting the cost of college education	a. yes b. no
Source of Money	Primary source of financial support during college	a. grants/loans b. family/spouse
Community Involvement	Involvement in Mexican-American community while in college	a. yes b. no
Mexican-American Peers	Mexican-Americans comprised primary peer group during college	a. yes b. no
Foreign Environment	UCLA experienced as a foreign, hostile environment	a. yes b. no
Discrimination	Student experienced discrimination at UCLA	a. yes b. no
UCLA GPA	Grade point average at graduation from UCLA	a. 3.0 and above b. below 3.0

Table 1

Traditional and Nontraditional Students by Selected Variables (N=63)

Variable	% Nontrad.	% Traditional	χ^2 Lambda
First Language			
English	88	56	25.40**
Spanish	12	44	.21
Dominant Language			
English	74	24	
Spanish	4	34	55.44**
bilingual	22	42	.34
First Attend College			
yes	0	29	33.92**
no	100	71	.56
Community SES			
low	19	67	
middle	81	33	47.00**
high	0	0	.44
H.S. Composition			
Anglo	84	38	
minority	4	27	45.66**
integrated	12	35	.41
Teacher Encouragement			
yes	81	58	46.74**
no	19	42	.14
College Prep			
yes	96	69	25.20**
no	4	31	.20
Financial Difficulty			
yes	25	62	27.86**
no	75	38	.32
Parental Education			
College	86	0	
High School	7	22	153.06**
Grade school	7	78	.21
Generation			
First	15	42	
Second	48	47	26.87**
Third	37	11	.13
First B.A.			
yes	23	61	29.63**
no	77	39	.32
Ethnic Composition			
Anglo	69	30	
minority	8	50	45.88**
integrated	23	20	.31
Counselor Encouragement			
yes	88	37	
no	12	63	55.48**
			.44
Decided College			
grade school	79	47	
high school	17	36	22.98**
after h.s.	4	17	.18
Community College Transfer			
yes	28	47	7.7*
no	72	53	.11
Source of Money			
grants/loans	20	91	102.0**
family/spouse	80	9	.69

Table 1 (continued)

Community Involvement				Mexican-American Peers			
yes	24	52	16.64**	yes	20	55	25.3**
no	76	48	.18	no	80	45	.26
Foreign Environment				Discrimination			
yes	17	72	61.24**	yes	24	69	40.7**
no	83	28	.52	no	76	31	.43
				UCLA GPA			
				3.0 and above	90	58	26.62**
				below 3.0	10	42	.21

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$